

Salisbury, North Carolina
March 19, 2019

SPECIAL MEETING

PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem David Post Presiding; Council Members Karen Alexander, William Brian Miller, and Tamara Sheffield; City Manager W. Lane Bailey, City Clerk Diane Gilmore, and City Attorney J. Graham Corriher.

ABSENT: Mayor Al Heggins.

Salisbury City Council met in Council Chambers in City Hall located at 217 South Main Street. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Post at 4:01 p.m.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

Transit Manager Rodney Harrison introduced Architecture Engineering Construction Operations and Management (AECOM) Technical Services of North Carolina, Inc. Transportation Planner Kurt Neufang who is the Project Manager for the City's long range Public Transportation Master Plan. He added Mr. Neufang has worked with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Metropolitan Planning Organization, and has managed public transportation systems in North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas and at several universities.

Mr. Neufang shared he represents the Transportation and Engineering Firm AECOM located in Raleigh, North Carolina. He noted AECOM has worked on the City of Salisbury's Transit System Long Range Plan for the last five months and hopes to provide Council a final report within the next few weeks.

Mr. Neufang reviewed current Transit route maps, and he pointed out the route service areas in relation to the population density areas, areas that are below poverty, and areas where citizens do not have access to vehicles. He noted current transit routes do not provide connectivity to some areas within the Spencer community. He shared several transit riders do not have other means of transportation and are dependent on the transit system. He commented some routes take

over an hour getting to and from places which is not convenient for riders. He pointed out transit service needs to be cost effective and convenient.

Mr. Neufang shared information regarding local rider surveys. He noted AECOM hoped for 175 surveys, but received 241 surveys. He pointed out the survey results included percentages of age, gender, employment status, and length of time participants have been riding the bus. He added riders were asked if they would have made the trip if the bus service had not been available, and he stated 39% would have walked and 25% would have not made the trip. He indicated the primary rider is transit dependent and has no other means of transportation. Mayor Pro Tem Post asked how the survey findings compares to other communities. Mr. Neufang commented the comparison varies depending on the coverage of the population density areas and how many vehicles serve the area.

Mr. Neufang reviewed the survey results regarding overall satisfaction of the provided days of service, hours of operation, and locations served by Salisbury Transit. Mayor Pro Tem Post pointed out the survey did not include people who do not take buses. Mr. Neufang agreed, and he noted the findings were from the on-board survey.

Mr. Neufang commented a community survey was conducted on the City's website and 31 responses were received.

Mr. Neufang referenced the community interviews, and he noted a person from Catawba College indicated 178 students do not have any means of transportation. He pointed out the City's Master Plan includes a partnership with Catawba College and Livingstone College to provide services on Friday and Saturday evenings. He added the Mayor of East Spencer indicated new housing for seniors will be constructed on Weant Street and will create a need for transit services in the area. Mayor Pro Tem Post asked if transit services are currently available on Weant and Long Streets. Mr. Neufang agreed, and he noted the plan includes a recommendation to provide service further down Weant Street.

Mr. Neufang stated better connection is needed to the Veteran's Affairs (VA) Medical Center, Walmart, and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC), and he pointed out transfers to other buses are needed to go to other areas. Mayor Pro Tem Post asked if buses travel Brenner Avenue and if citizens are stating that the routes do not go to the VA Hospital often enough. Mr. Harrison agreed, and he noted citizens requested more frequent and convenient connections.

Mayor Pro Tem Post asked how long the connections to and from the VA Hospital take. Mr. Harrison noted the connections take between one hour and 10 minutes to one hour and 20 minutes, and he pointed out Transit and the State are pushing for additional connections with fewer transfers that reach their destination quicker.

Mr. Neufang pointed out with the City conducting redevelopment in the Depot and Amtrak area it may provide an opportunity for the Greyhound Bus stop to be moved from East Spencer to the Depot to develop a multi-modal facility.

Mr. Neufang reviewed the term years for recommendations regarding fixed-route transit, microtransit, vanpool or rideshare, and regional connectivity. He pointed out by regionalizing services with Lexington, Statesville, and Kannapolis, the City would not bear the entire costs of the project, but would partner with local communities, municipalities, and the counties involved. He noted further recommendations include direct access to the VA Hospital, college-specific transit service, extending operating hours and weekend services, providing multiple locations for connections between routes, and coordination with Amtrak services.

Mr. Neufang shared that an on-site fueling facility is recommended within the five year term to be more convenient and include above ground tanks to be available for possibly changing to an alternative fuel in the future. He added Light Transit Vehicles (LTVs) are recommended to be more cost efficient than the current 30 to 35 foot buses. He reviewed maps showing existing and recommended fixed route systems to include phasing in eight routes in place of the current three route system. He reviewed the areas the eight recommended routes will cover and he noted the round-trip time frames for each route. He pointed out the recommended routes include a five to seven minute layover to allow bus drivers to take provided breaks and for riders to board the buses. He noted the recommendations are not removing any routes from areas that are currently served.

Councilmember Alexander asked if the triangles on the map include the route and she asked how many stops are on the route. Mr. Neufang explained triangles show the direction of the route and he added specific stop locations have not been identified. Mr. Harrison noted the arrows show the direction in which the buses will travel.

Mr. Neufang reviewed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Service area, and he noted the City is obligated by law to provide ADA Paratransit services every three quarters of a mile. He pointed out the Safe Ride Salisbury (SRS) route includes round trip service on Friday and Saturday evenings from 9:00 p.m. until 1:00 p.m. to Catawba College, Innes Street, Livingstone College, Walmart and Tinseltown. He noted the SRS route will have a 60 minute round trip or 30 minute trip with two vehicles.

Councilmember Alexander asked about plans to provide covered shelters at the bus stop at the Food Lion near Innes Street and Mahaley Avenue. She stated a citizen reached out to her regarding safe transit routes and keeping riders out of the rain at bus stops. She commented there is a lot of walking in that area. Mayor Pro Tem Post agreed. Mr. Neufang noted allowances are made in the plan for further amenities that include additional bus shelters, and he commented the shelters can be accommodated for walkers or wheelchairs and will provide lighting.

Mayor Pro Tem Post referenced Routes 6 and 7 and asked why the routes are nearly identical. Mr. Neufang explained the routes are bidirectional with one route starting in East Spencer traveling counter-clockwise and one route going through Spencer in a clock-wise direction. Councilmember Alexander requested clarification. Mr. Neufang pointed out the routes decrease a rider's wait time, but there is also a cost associated to providing two means of transportation for that route.

City Manager Lane Bailey pointed out the City's current Transit system does not provide services to all areas in the City, but it provides services within two other jurisdictions. He noted \$480,000 of tax revenue is budgeted in addition to the vehicle tax money provided to the Transit system without any funding from the communities receiving service. He indicated the City might need to consider bringing the Transit routes back within the City limits to better serve its citizens and get more routes in areas within the City.

Councilmember Alexander asked why the City allowed routes to extend past the City limits. Mr. Bailey commented it was before he came to Salisbury and he is unsure why the City has allowed routes to extend beyond the City limits. He noted it does not make sense that certain areas are not served within the City limits but services are provided within two other cities. He recommended transit services be discontinued to those other areas and only serve the City unless funding is provided from the County or the two town receiving service.

Councilmember Alexander asked if any type of grants would be available to those communities. Mr. Bailey explained revenue is received to cover the cost of the transit system by road mileage and density, and he added the City can get the same road mileage and density by serving the City limits and not going into other communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Post noted some areas on the map receive less coverage, and he pointed out but both Spencer and East Spencer do not have much in the way of the independent economies and people may live in those communities but work, eat, and shop in Salisbury. Mr. Bailey noted he thinks this is a conversation that needs to take place with Rowan County.

Councilmember Alexander commented a conversation may need to take place with those communities, Rowan County and possibly state and federal officials to explain the City cannot afford to continue providing those services solely through the City's funding. She noted the City's community is aging. Mayor Pro Tem Post agreed, and he commented there is a 30% increase in seniors. Mr. Bailey commented he does not disagree with approaching the state and federal government but he noted it seems a financial solution will take place with local funding.

Mayor Pro Tem Post pointed out current or proposed route plans do not reach Wellington Hills or Hidden Creek communities which includes 400 homes of predominantly retired citizens.

Mr. Neufang noted he has information regarding what the cost sharing would need to be for the other communities to partner and pay their portion of the proposal.

Mr. Neufang explained the SRS Microtransit as an option for on-demand service with smaller vehicles similar to Uber. He noted routes would include designated stops called feeder points to connect riders from microtransit to fixed routes. He reviewed the pros and cons of providing microtransit service including the need to meet ADA regulations. He shared the coverage area of the three microtransit zones. Mr. Harrison noted zones could be expanded to meet future transportation needs. Councilmember Alexander asked how the zones were designated. Mr. Neufang commented there is a need for transportation service in areas within the City limits that are not provided by fixed route services.

Mr. Neufang stated the recommended RCCC evening services would run on-demand from 7:30 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. to reach the microtransit zones. He noted negotiations with RCCC could take place for funding support.

Mr. Neufang commented Rowan Express is currently coordinating services with the County. He pointed out within the next 10 to 20 years, regional routes would reach the Kannapolis, Lexington, Rockwell and Statesville areas. He mentioned it would be a partnership with Iredell County and the City of Statesville with a shared cost to provide services in the future.

Mr. Neufang provided Council with scenarios regarding funding options and levels of investment. He added each scenario includes fixed-route service, microtransit services provided by contracted providers, regional service, college service, administrative, and capital recommendations.

Mayor Pro Tem Post asked about the estimated revenue being only 10% of actual fares paid by the riders. Mr. Neufang noted fare recovery is approximately 6% which was \$72,000 this past year. He added providing bus fares at no cost could help increase ridership.

Mayor Pro Tem Post asked about the number of seats on a bus. Mr. Neufang commented a 30 foot coach bus has approximately 28 seats. Mayor Pro Tem Post asked how often the buses are full. Mr. Neufang noted different times of the day will provide different ridership, but the information was not included in the survey. Mr. Harrison indicated the highest ridership occurs between 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Post asked if tickets are tracked with when they are purchased. Mr. Harrison explained the ticket system is manual and includes punch cards. Mayor Pro Tem Post pointed out staff does not have the data. Mr. Harrison agreed. Mr. Neufang noted it is recommended to add electronic fare boxes to keep track of fares purchased.

Councilmember Miller asked about other cities that have similar transit systems. Mr. Neufang noted communities in Wilson, Rocky Mount, Danville, VA and Hinesville, GA have transit systems that are similar to Salisbury. Mr. Harrison noted according to the State, the City has roughly 11 systems in which it is compared, and he added it is very difficult to make comparisons because each system has its own characteristics. He shared the NCDOT has grouped the City with similar cities such as Concord, Goldsboro, Hendersonville, Rocky Mount, Jacksonville, Burlington, Greenville, Gastonia, and Cary.

Councilmember Sheffield asked when Council is expected to make a decision, and she noted further questions need to be addressed. She then asked how the routes match with areas below the poverty line, heavy density areas, and areas where residents do not have access to vehicles. Mr. Bailey requested Council send individual questions to him, and he will direct the questions to Mr. Harrison. He suggested a work session to provide further discussion, and he noted information can be shared with the other communities that Transit serves to talk about concerns and discuss potential participation in the proposed plan. By consensus, Council agreed.

Mayor Pro Tem Post thanked Mr. Neufang and Mr. Harrison for their presentation.

Mr. Bailey shared it may be possible for the GIS department to create a map in regards to Councilmember Sheffield's question regarding poverty lines. He requested Council advise him if there are any additions to the Master Plan it would like to include in the follow-up meeting. Councilmember Alexander asked if electric buses were considered. Mr. Neufang agreed, and he shared autonomous buses were included in the report as a possibility within the next 20 years.

Mr. Neufang pointed out he presented an overall Master Plan that included information to be considered within the next 20 years. He added no action is needed from Council at this time. Councilmember Alexander asked if the work session will occur after Council provides items to Mr. Bailey to be sent to Mr. Neufang. Mr. Bailey agreed. Councilmember Sheffield thanked Mr. Neufang for presenting to Council.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS PRESENTATIONS

(a) Community Appearance Commission

Community Appearance Commission (CAC) Vice Chair Jane Creech introduced members of the committee who were in the audience. She thanked Councilmember Sheffield for her support and leadership as Council liaison and she thanked staff liaison Urban Design Planner Alyssa Nelson and Senior Administrative Specialist Diana Moghrabi for all they do to support the CAC. Ms. Creech presented highlights and goals for 2019-2020.

Ms. Creech pointed out incentive grants have been provided for more than 30 years through the Municipal Service District (MSD) Grants for downtown re-development. She pointed out six MSD Grants totaling \$22,000 were awarded during FY2018-2019 for projects to improve the downtown area with private investments of over \$97,000. She added eight Innes Street Improvement Grants totaling \$25,000 were awarded with private investments of over \$50,000 to improve downtown economics.

Ms. Creech requested \$25,000 for both the MSD and Innes Street Improvement Grants. She explained the requested funding will allow the CAC to continue promotions, hold quarterly meetings with the Neighborhood Leaders Alliance (NLA), conduct spruce-up weeks, recognize Landscape of the Month awards, host the Blockwork and We Dig Salisbury events, and to continue to reward and recognize recipients.

Ms. Creech noted the CAC plans to work with other boards and commissions to address the litter issue throughout the City. She thanked Council for its continued support.

Mayor Pro Tem Post thanked the CAC for all it does to make the City a beautiful place.

Councilmember Alexander noted it is great to leverage resources for the funding the CAC is requesting, and she pointed out there is a great return on the City's investment.

Councilmember Sheffield stated she is proud to be the liaison, and she thanked the CAC for all it does for the City.

(b) Public Art Committee

Public Art Committee (PAC) Chair Barbara Perry thanked Council, staff liaison Urban Design Planner Alyssa Nelson and Senior Administrative Specialist Diana Moghrabi for all they do to support the PAC. Ms. Perry presented highlights and goals for 2019-2020.

Ms. Perry reviewed committee membership, information regarding the Sculpture Show and other projects the committee has completed.

Ms. Perry noted the PAC partners with the City regarding the Mural, Sculpture Shows, and the History and Art Trail. She added the PAC is working to transition alleys through the Art in the Alley Project.

Ms. Perry noted the PAC is working to transition from a subcommittee of the CAC to a fully City appointed commission. She commented the PAC will determine its scope and include the revision and adoption of current guidelines, develop an annual budget and determine funding sources, establish terms through various qualifications, and outline duties of the committee. She noted members have worked with Interim Planning Director Brian Hiatt and consulted with City Attorney Graham Corriher but are still in the planning process of developing the committee.

Ms. Perry pointed out the \$20,000 funding request includes \$10,000 for the Sculpture Show, \$5,000 for the History and Art Trail, and \$5,000 for the Art in the Alley Project.

Ms. Perry introduced committee members that were in the audience. Councilmember Alexander pointed out members of the committee worked the North Carolina Main Street Conference with programs and provided tours. Ms. Perry agreed, and she thanked Council for their support.

Councilmember Alexander noted she was glad the Sculpture brochures were included in the welcome packets for the North Carolina Main Street Conference. Ms. Perry thanked Ms. Nelson and Web and Marketing Services Coordinator Fern Blair for preparing the brochure and including in the welcome packets. Council thanked the PAC for all it does for the City.

(c) Housing Advocacy Commission

Housing Advocacy Commission (HAC) Chair Barbara Perry introduced members of the HAC who were in the audience. She stated the board includes nine members with two subcommittees: the Community Involvement Community and Code Services Committee. She pointed out in April two Council appointed members will join the committee. She reviewed highlights and goals for 2019-2020.

Ms. Perry provided Council information regarding updated codes:

- Downtown Maintenance Code, updated in 2012
- Boarded Up Property Code, updated in 2013
- Stricter Housing codes including the 48 hour response from property owners, updated in 2014
- Vacant, Neglected, Abandoned, and Condemnation Danger Code, updated in 2015
- Residential Remedial Action Program (RAP) Property ordinance, created in 2019

Ms. Perry pointed out the RAP is a newly written ordinance that took nearly two years and three workshops with input from the public, property managers, realtors, and property owners. She added several meetings took place with a representative from the Charlotte Police Department's RAP program and Police Chief Jerry Stokes. She pointed out the Ordinance was approved by Council and the program is implemented through police work with the County and City. She commented nearly 500 properties have voluntarily registered for the program.

Code Enforcement Officer Michael Cotilla pointed out 22 demolitions have been completed that include nine demolitions funded by the City and 13 demolitions that were privately funded. He stated the owner of properties located at 1 Shive Street and 2 Shive Street demolished and rezoned the properties into three parcels for development. He noted there are future plans for three additional houses to be completed by the same owner on Shive Street.

Mr. Cotilla commented extensive renovations have been conducted at 816 North Main Street and the property should be completely renovated by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Cotilla noted he distributes Tenant's Rights Brochures during his daily housing inspections and during community meetings. He added the brochures are displayed at Rowan Helping Ministries. Ms. Perry shared committee members also distribute Tenant's rights and Landlord's Responsibility Brochures to Rowan County Social Services.

Ms. Perry pointed out the committee's goal is to focus on affordable housing with emphasis on affordable senior housing. She noted speakers from the Salisbury Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Salisbury Housing Authority spoke to the committee members regarding Section 8 Housing, and she added the committee will have the director of the Rowan County Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity speak to the committee regarding Section 8 Housing. She commented the committee will provide Council a report of its findings. She noted the HAC will continue its partnership with the CAC for Blockwork and work with other groups on fair housing.

Ms. Perry pointed out the HAC requests funding of \$2,000 for housing workshops and \$3,000 to support the BlockWork event. She thanked Council for its continued support and participation during the BlockWork event.

Mayor Pro Tem Post thanked the commission for its work in the City.

(d) Hurley Park Advisory Board

Hurley Park Advisory Board Chair Jane Ritchie reviewed current members of the Advisory Board, and she thanked them for their service.

Ms. Ritchie reviewed the highlights from 2018:

- Hurley Park hosted its 31st Annual Spring Celebration event
- Partnered with the Waterworks Visual Art with an Art Show
- Hurley Park was featured in the 2018 March issue of the Salisbury Magazine
- Provided annual educational lectures on garden related topic
- Partnered with All-A-Flutter Farms, LLC., a Monarch Butterfly Farm located in Highpoint for the 2nd Annual Butterfly Release
- Completed renovations of the Koontz-Walser Daffodil Garden
- Completed renovations to the gardens and continued park maintenance
- Hurley Park Staff wrote 26 articles for the Salisbury Post and promoted Hurley Park on Social Media

Ms. Ritchie noted the park is a great setting for weddings, prom pictures, meetings, events, garden tours, walking, lunch breaks and family enjoyment.

Ms. Ritchie thanked Arborist Mark Martin and Public Garden Manager Danielle Cutting for providing daily park maintenance, and she noted it is a demanding job to oversee 18 acres and more than 45 named gardens. She also thanked Maintenance Supervisor Brad Gorman and his crew and Parks and Recreation staff for their support to Hurley Park.

Ms. Ritchie pointed out the past year was challenging due to hurricanes and other storms that created sink holes, path erosion, and plant and tree foundation damages that resulted in more than \$15,00 for repairs and replacements.

Ms. Ritchie reviewed the 2019-2020 goals:

- Continue offering the Spring Celebration Event and annual educational lectures
- Renovation to the park's irrigation system will be completely renovated by a \$25,000 grant given to the City from the Hurley Park Foundation
- Continue the annual Butterfly release
- Provide renovation and replanting of the gardens
- Replace Swell bridges

Ms. Ritchie pointed out the Hurley Park Foundation has contributed \$1.5 million in capital improvement funding and matching maintenance funds in the last 34 years and continues to pay half of maintenance and salary costs. She added the community has provided nearly \$500,000 in donations for garden adoptions and other improvements, and she noted the City budget has funded the other half of the necessary expenses.

Ms. Ritchie thanked the Hurley family, Hurley Park Foundation, City staff, park visitors and Council for their continued support of Hurley Park.

Councilmember Alexander thanked the board for its work, and she thanked Ms. Ritchie for her 34 years of dedicated volunteer service.

Councilmember Sheffield pointed out the collaboration between boards and commissions and with public and private entities is critical to the City's success, and she thanked the boards and commissions for their work.

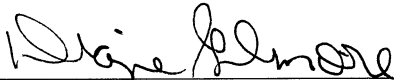
Councilmember Alexander thanked the citizens for all their volunteer hours and their involvement with the boards and commissions. Mayor Pro Tem Post thanked the boards and commissions for all they do to make the City great.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember Alexander. All Council members in attendance agreed unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.



Al Heggins, Mayor



Diane Gilmore, City Clerk